

*Wednesday, 18 January 2012 - Strasbourg*

Pino Arlacchi (S&D ). - Mr President, we are discussing the demolition of democracy going on in Hungary. But a very similar path is being followed in Romania, and both situations closely resemble the patterns of the Berlusconi era in Italy.

In Romania we are facing an authoritarian populism that is altering the rule of law, concentrating power in the hands of the President. The mantra of this right-wing populism is the same in all cases. Its leaders believe that, since they won elections, they can do whatever they like with the constitutional structure of their country to tell the majority their mission is accomplished: 'les jeux sont faits' . Populist leaders everywhere have the same targets: the parliament, the constitutional court, the judiciary, the so-called Leftist press.

It is outrageous to see a government in Romania using the police and the secret service to intimidate political opponents, restrict civil liberties and falsify elections. At the same time, public television has become an instrument of government propaganda and the Romanian press is considered a threat to national security, like terrorism and organised crime. It is equally outrageous to see political elections in an EU country organised by a body with a military structure like the spatial telecommunications service under the orders of Băsescu.

Thousands of people are demonstrating in the streets of every Romanian city against their government and to defend their basic rights. We should stand united, using all the instruments we have to counter this threat to the very foundation of our Union.

[source: [www.europarl.europa.eu](http://www.europarl.europa.eu) ]